Navy OSC Assessment

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OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL

Navigating Stress ★ Building A Resilient Navy

Assessment & Analysis

2009

- OSC Focus Groups
- Quick Poll
- Comms Focus Groups
- Training Assessments

2010

- Recruiter Stress
- Quick Poll
- Command Stress Assessment (DEOCS)
- Best Practices
- Online Focus Groups?

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Overview

- 2009 Behavioral Health Quick Poll
- Recruiter Stress Study
- Unit Level Stress Assessment

2009 Behavioral Health Quick Poll

Objective

- Navy Operational Stress Control (OSC) sponsored poll to assess Navy perceptions of stress and suicide prevention
- Factors assessed:
  - Level and type of stress
  - Coping methods for dealing with stress
  - Perception of command support for stress
  - Awareness of suicide prevention mechanisms

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Methodology

- Poll questions were adapted from previous surveys (2005 DoD Survey of Health Related Behaviors, DMDC Status of Forces Survey) or developed with sponsor
- Random sample of AC Navy personnel selected
  - Stratified by officer/enlisted paygroups
- Navy Messages sent to commands requesting selected personnel complete the poll online (http://quickpolling.nprst.navy.mil)
  - Commands given 10 business days to complete poll
  - Reminder Navy Message sent mid-way through the fielding period
  - Poll could only be accessed once by those selected using correct usernames/passwords

Survey Administration

Poll start date:	May 20, 2009
Poll end date:	June 3, 2009
Eligible Sample:	7,900
Eligible Returns:	2,440
Response Rate:	32%

Margins of Error

+/- 3% or less for Enlisted

+/- 4% or less for Officers

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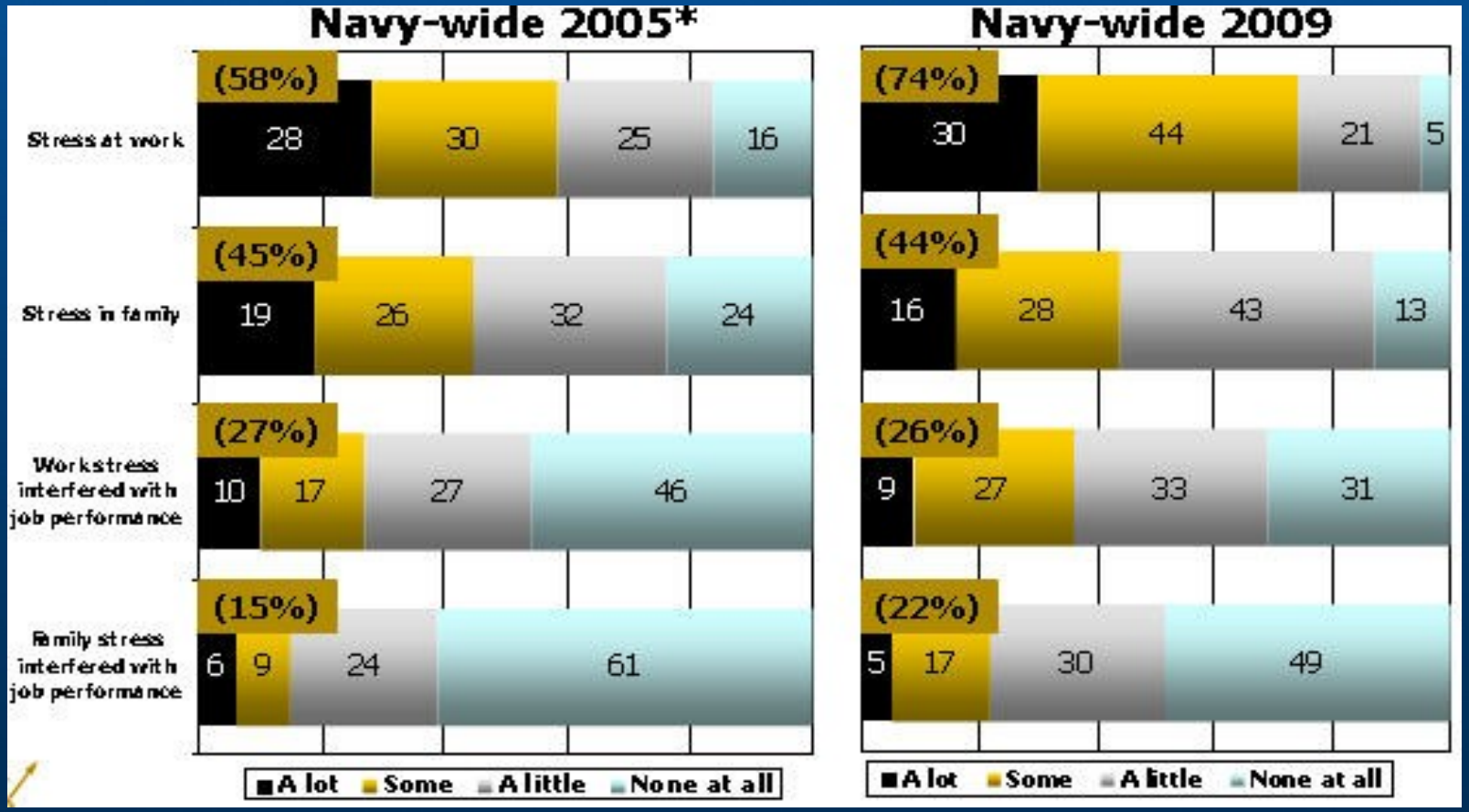
Type & Level of Stress Experienced in the Past 12 Months



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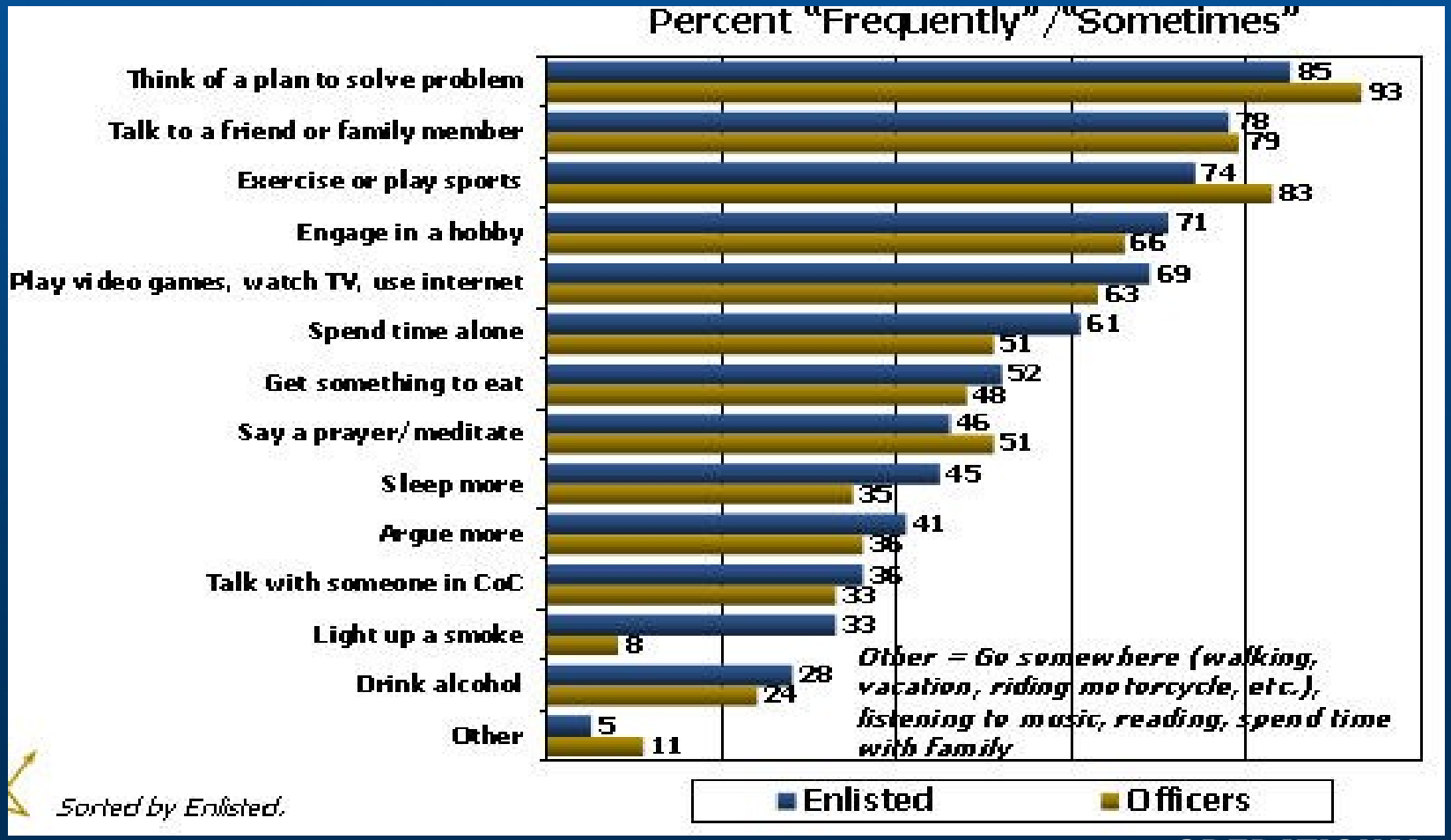
Stress Coping Methods: Overall



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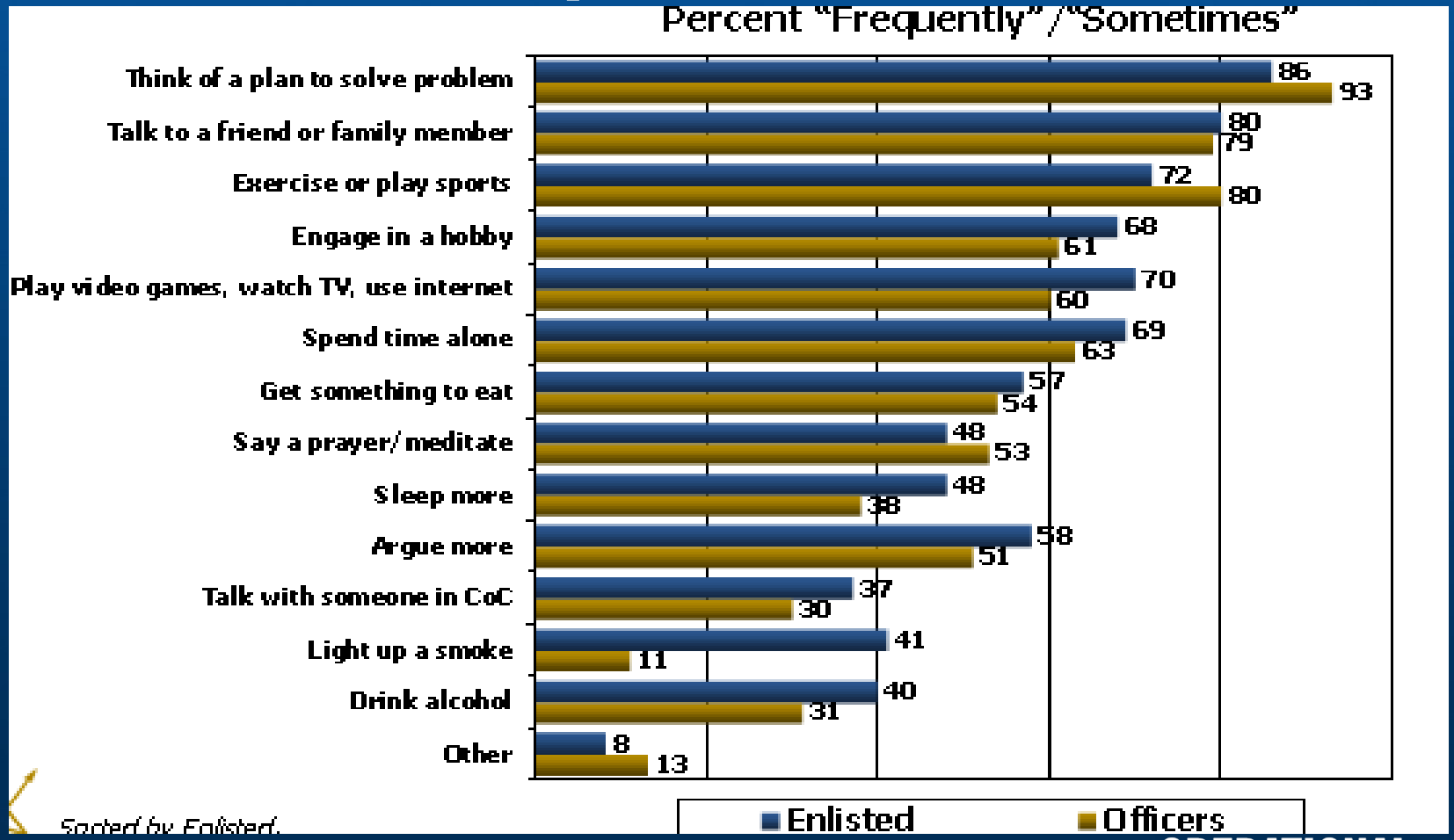
Stress Coping Methods: Highly Stressed Group



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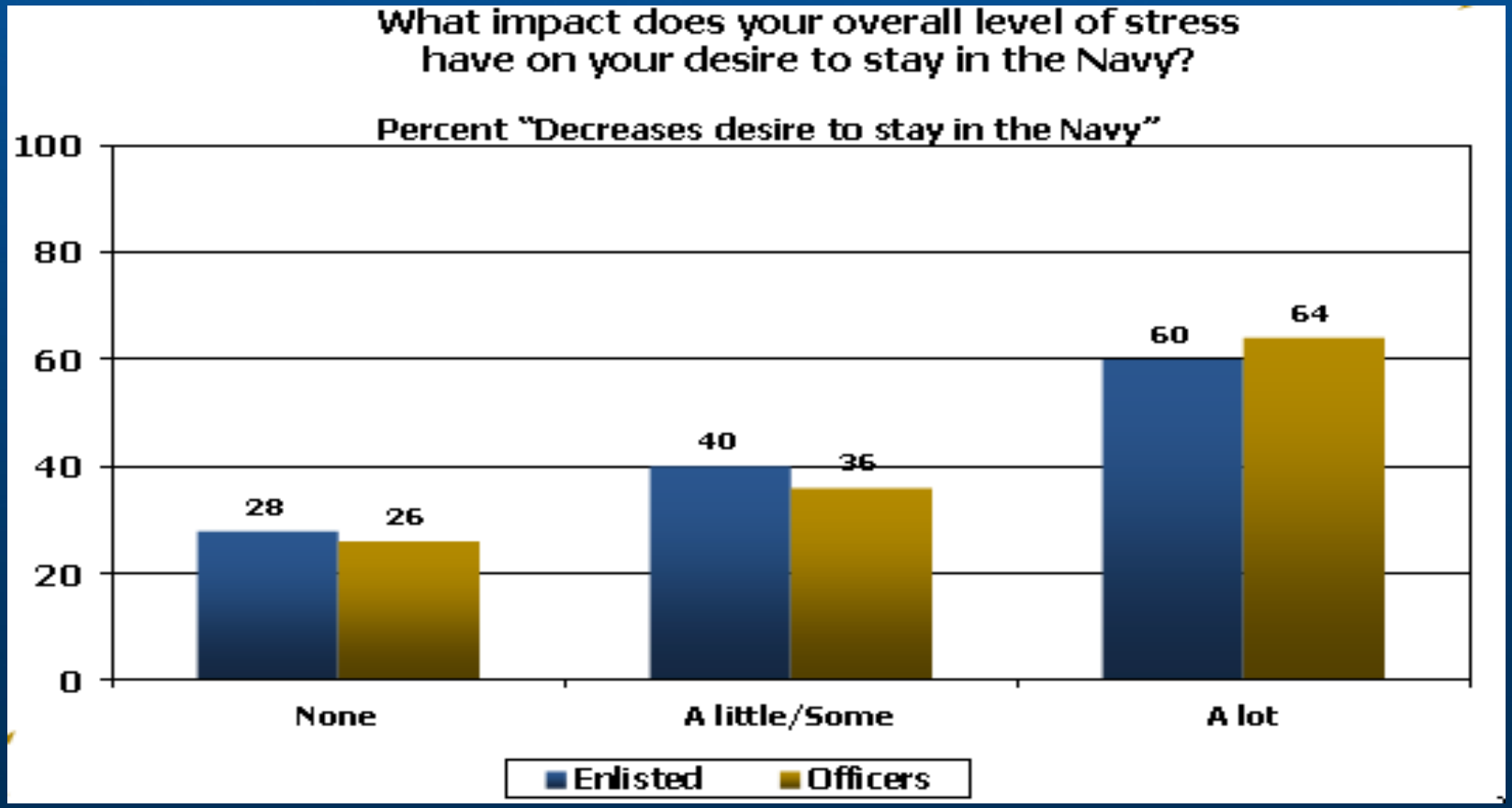
Impact of Stress Level on Retention



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Summary (1 of 2)

Operational Stress Control

- Work stress has increased
  - Up from 58% in 2005 to 74% in 2009 who report some or a lot of stress at work
- Key work-related stressors:
  - Unpredictability, lack of personnel, insufficient training, long work hours pre-/post-deployment
- Stress impacts performance
- The most stressed are
  - Least likely to engage in positive behaviors
  - More likely to expect negative consequences associated with getting help

Summary (2 of 2)

Suicide Prevention

- Most have attended Suicide Prevention training in the past year
  - Top training prevention sources were member of command and NKO/other computer-based training
  - Respondents prefer training by a person (member of command, FFSC, medical staff, etc.) to online training
- While many believe their command would be supportive if a Sailor sought help for suicidal thoughts or actions, most also believed there would be negative consequences as well (command would treat person differently, it would negatively impact person's career)
- Approximately half of officers and enlisted know their command's Suicide Prevention Coordinator
- Most reported that actions are being taken at their command to prevent suicide and that they would know what to do if someone talked about suicide

Stress Action Items

Finding: Work stress in increasing and impacting performance, health and safety
- Communicate productivity and retention data to aid understanding of stress as it relates to decision making
- Factor in the cost of stress in tempo, manning, and training decisions and develop mitigation strategies
- Fully implement OSC

Finding: Many Sailors perceive negative consequences to using available resources and chain of command for assistance with stress
- OSC Strategic Communications/Marketing campaign to send message that addressing stress early can be career enhancing
- Review of policies that create barriers to seeking help or hinder reintegration

Finding: “Very stressed” Sailors more likely to use negative coping, expect negative consequences and perceive little command support
- Focus OSC leadership training on the importance of command support and need to address perceptions related to stigma
- Fully implement OSC

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Suicide Prevention Action Items

Finding: In-person training is preferred

- Continue development of the Suicide Prevention Coordinator network
- Secure necessary funding for Suicide Prevention Summits, training conferences, etc.

Finding: Sailors believe they will get help but at a cost to career

- Review of policies that create barriers to seeking help
- Accurate information related to security clearances, seeking help, etc.

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Recruiter Stress Study

Background

- VCNO testimony to HASC on psychological stress in military
- Concerns over Army recruiter suicides in early 2009 and increased focus on suicide in the military
- Navy training on Occupational Stress Control (OSC) rolling out this FY
  - Efforts underway to support roll out, including assessing Navy's stress baseline, how to best publicize OSC, and how to assess unit level stress

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Navy Recruiter Stress Project

- All Navy recruiters asked to participate in initial stress assessment
  - Short, web-based survey

- Recruiters randomly divided into three groups:
  - Control – Will receive no stress-navigation messages
  - Experimental-SMS – Will receive stress-navigation messages by text message (SMS)
  - Experimental-email – Will receive stress-navigation messages through email

Navy Recruiter Stress Project

- During 3 month period, experimental groups receive occasional (no more than once a week) messages on navigating stress (e.g., “Name three things for which you are thankful,” “Feeling stressed? Take a deep, slow breath”, “There are four stages of the stress continuum—visit www.stress.navy.mil to learn how to navigate to green.”)
- All recruiters asked to participate in final stress assessment, about three months after initial
- Results compared between 3 groups
  - Determine if there are differences between initial and final assessment for each group

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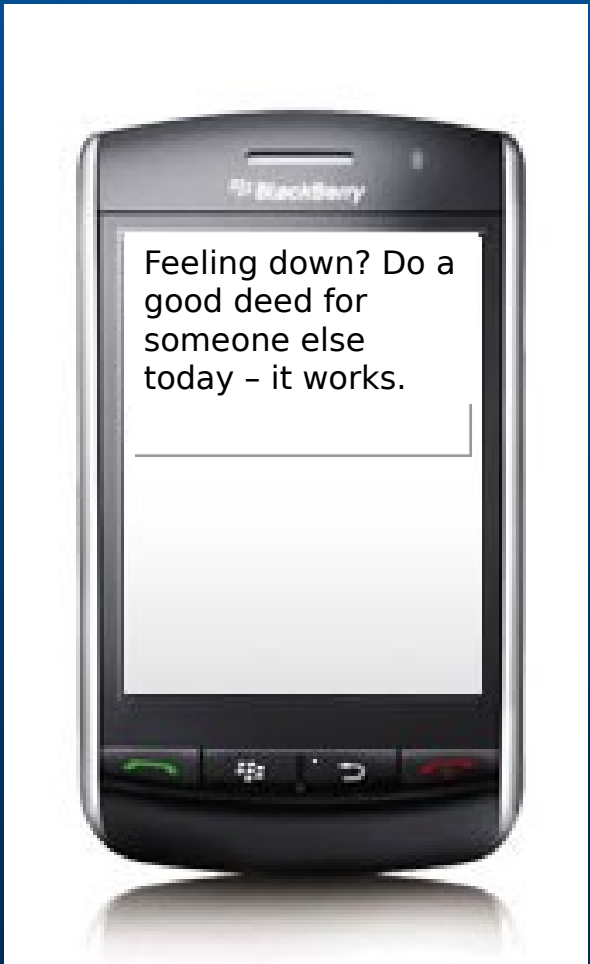
Navy Recruiter Stress Project



- During 3 month period, experimental groups receive occasional messages on navigating stress
  - *Feeling stressed? Take time to talk it out with a friend.*
  - *Worries on your mind? Make a list. Sort out those you can do something about & those you can't. Use your energy for action NOT anxiety.*
  - *Limit your caffeine and sugar, they can contribute to stress – http://bit.ly/cHNVhO*

Expected Impact

- Determine stress levels of recruiters in recruiter-friendly economic environment (i.e., high-unemployment)
- Determine whether occasional support messages have impact on stress levels
  - If messages reduce stress levels, institutionalizing support messages may be appropriate for unfriendly recruiting environment
  - If messages reduce stress levels, may become part of Navy-wide Operational Stress Control (OSC) training

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Timeline

Conduct initial survey	January 2010
Send experimental messages	Feb-Apr 2010
Conduct final survey	May-June 2010
Brief of results	July 2010

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Operational Stress Control Unit Level Assessment

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Background

- 2009 Behavioral Health Quick Poll assessed stress issues from a Navy-wide perspective
  - Most effective means of addressing stress concerns and taking positive actions often occurs at command or unit level
  - Need for command-level stress assessment to supplement Navy-wide data
- Command level assessment items will be developed, field-tested and integrated into the DEOMI DEOCS survey, the most popular command climate assessment tool in DoD
- DEOCS has long history and has been well socialized throughout the Navy
  - Both Sailors and leaders are familiar with the DEOCS and are confident in its administration
- Project involves partnership between Navy OSC, Navy's Diversity Directorate, NPRST and DEOMI
- Desired Effect: OSC questions being made a permanent part of the DEOCS for Navy, and perhaps the other services as well

Approach

- Develop a test bed of questions from Behavioral Health Quick Poll and OSC training evaluation survey
- Field test survey items in operational (Ship) and shore-based commands
- Use focus group methodology to critique survey items and explore other questions
- Analyze, refine, reduce items
- Include preliminary unit-level assessment in research section of DEOCS
- Analyze, refine, reduce items
- Incorporate final items into Navy version of DEOCS
- Develop scoring key to assist units/commands with interpretation/action plans

Methodology

- Survey/Focus groups conducted on USS IWO Jima in Norfolk
- Survey/Focus groups conducted at NPC in Millington
- Total N = 174

Preliminary Results

Survey Comments: Top Five Stress Issues

- Management
- Communication
- Schedule
- Time off
- More people needed

Management

- “Enforce occupational military standards for all personnel– use supervision to make sure this is accomplished.”
- “Let detailers do their jobs! Quit with unnecessary paperwork that is not required but for our own CoC to look good.”
- “More policy stability.”
- “Provide well thought-out initiatives. Not ‘quick fixes’ that require more fixes.”
- “Worry less about the little things and let the members do their jobs.”
- “Use chain-of-command both up and down. Micromanaging from upper CoC tends to make certain situations more stressful.

Communication

- “Communicate. Once priorities and responsibilities are laid out on the table and agreed upon by all parties, focusing on the task at hand is much easier.”
- “Communicate down the chain-of-command with important relevant information to enable us to be ahead of the curve instead of blindsided constantly.”
- “I thrive in an organized environment with good communication.”
- “Take what I say seriously.”
- “Make senior CoC aware of how their threats and approaches to situations are being perceived by the crew.”
- “Biweekly or monthly updates of objectives and goals.”

Schedule

- “Better plan events. Too often, workload increases due to poor planning by outside agencies.”
- “Less meetings/ musters = more time for work!”
- “Reduce repetitive meetings. We pre-brief the brief before presenting the brief. It takes way too long.”
- “Quit rushing things and waiting until the last minute to accomplish job initiative.”
- “Need a secure schedule. Every day there is a change.”
- “Stop scheduling so many meetings, evolutions, requirements in a short period of time.”
- “Provide systems that handle the demands asked of them, that work fast and consistently.”

Time Off

- “Bring back the duty day off, when you had the day after duty off.”
- “Allow and mandate personal time off. With long working hours, it is hard to get personal items taken care of during the week when most businesses are open.”
- “More liberty. People have a life outside of this boat.”
- “Half days on Fridays.”
- “A day off every other week.”
- “If there is no more work to be done, let us go home instead of keeping us around doing meaningless work until 1600.”

More Personnel

- “Fill the empty billets in the shop. The work keeps coming, yet I am not allowed to hire to fill vacancies.”
- “Increase manning to minimize overwhelming workload.”
- “With a massive workload and few personnel, customers are not adequately cared for. More workers allow for a more personal approach with customers (service members), which is paramount at an NPC command!”
- “Increase manning to allow for a more manageable detailer-to-Sailor ratio.”
- “Bring 25% more staff onboard to help better distribute workload.”

Focus Group Results

Sailor Recommendations for Unit Level Survey

- Most liked the survey items; few problems with interpretation, content etc. "You pretty much covered it all"
- Number of suggestions for additions/modifications:
  - Add stress checklist to Unit Level Assessment
  - Allow respondents to specify department (where feasible) in order to accurately address problem within command
  - Ask about what Sailor does to relieve stress (physical activity, talk to chaplain, talk to friend), and also ask what command does
  - Ask if Sailor feels adequately trained to deal with stress
  - Ask if Sailor feels isolated and/or alienated

Sailor Recommendations for Unit Level Survey (continued)

- Include other “stressors” on unit level survey
  - Working hours
  - Intimidation
  - Unpredictability
  - Micromanagement
  - Lack of Personal Time

- Suggested new question
  - “How much did stress from your military job interfere with your family life?”

Additional Stressors for the Checklist

- Financial issues
- Family issues (being away from them, worried about them, etc.)
- IAs (adequate notice, serving one, being on a candidate list, stress on family not knowing if/when service member will serve one)
- Lack of resources (materials, equipment, machines, personnel) to fulfill job duty
- PRT
- PTS
- Taskers
- Work hours (long, unreliable)

Additional Stressors (continued)

- Inability to schedule personal items due to uncertainty of schedule
- Poor communication
- No consistency
- Time pressures, waiting for signatures

Current Plans

- Complete analysis of survey and focus groups
  - Analysis delayed due to Millington floods (very stressful!)
- Meeting of the players at DEOMI (June/July) to discuss way ahead
- Begin test of items within the Navy DEOCS “research section”
- Develop scoring key to assist units/commands with interpretation/action plans

Expected Impact

- Unit level tool for rapid assessment of operational stress
  - CO, CMC can intervene or ask for assistance if higher than expected levels exist
    - Will facilitate and focus OSC training needs
    - Assess progress over time through comparisons to Navy-wide norms from BHQP and past unit level assessments at same command

Questions?

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